

**CONGRESSMAN DAVID HOBSON**  
**Prepared Testimony in Support of H.R. 2307**  
**June 11, 2003**

Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of legislation I recently introduced in conjunction with Congressman Ortiz, Congresswoman Pryce, Congressman Tiberi and several Members of the Ohio and Texas delegations.

As a Member of the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittee, which has jurisdiction over much of the VA's funding, I was very pleased to learn that the Subcommittee on Health of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee has agreed to consider this important legislation, which would authorize the construction of two new and critically needed VA medical facilities in Central Ohio and Southern Texas.

The estimated 250,000 veterans now living in Central Ohio are in an undesirable situation. The Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services (CARES) access analysis shows that a significant gap exists for primary and specialty care for the veterans living in Central Ohio.

The current Chalmers P. Wylie VA Outpatient Clinic in Columbus has a high quality, professional medical staff, but the facility itself is inadequate for the needs of area veterans. Originally, this clinic was to handle 135,000 annual visits, but last year it saw more than 192,000. Over the years, far too many veterans have had to travel for many hours to larger VA medical centers in Cleveland, Cincinnati and elsewhere because of the limited services offered by the current 118,000-square-foot clinic. The cost to transfer these veterans has reached several million dollars per year.

Furthermore, this clinic is not on federal land, and the VA does not own the facility. Its lease, which is from a private company at significant cost to the taxpayers, is set to expire in 2014 resulting in an uncertain future for Ohio's veterans.

The 260,000-square-foot clinic proposed by this legislation, which is estimated to cost \$65 million to construct and \$25 million to equip, will be located on available federal land at the Defense Supply Center, Columbus (DSCC). A new facility on this site would not require any land acquisition costs and would pave the way for potential Department of Defense / VA sharing, which is a House priority as evidenced by the recent 426 to 0 passage of H.R. 1911, to enhance cooperation between the two agencies.

And most important, the new clinic will have greater total patient capacity and offer a much wider array of medical services for the veterans of Central Ohio.

As a veteran, I am proud to support this legislation, which addresses the needs of veterans in both Ohio and Texas.

Mr. Chairman, I join today with my colleagues, and veterans across Ohio and Texas in support of this legislation.

---

DAVID L. HOBSON  
Member of Congress